Guests present were: Miss M. BARRY, D. BRADLEY, Miss S. W. CONDER, Mr. and Mrs. H. CULLINHAM, Mr. and Mrs. N. CURTIS, Mrs. J. H. ELGOOD, Mrs. B. M. GIBBS, Mrs. U. HODGINS, Mrs. J. M. HOGG, Dr. C. IMBODEN, Mr. and Mrs. G. R. C. LUMSDEN, Mrs. R. E. F. PEAL, Mrs. G. H. N. SETON-WATSON and Mr. and Mrs. B. WORTHINGTON.

Dr. L. H. Brown, O.B.E., gave an address on Flamingos and Pelicans on the Rift Valley lakes in Kenya. He explained the unforseen results of the introduction of the fish *Tilapia grahami* to Lake Nakuru from Lake Magadi by the health authorities to control mosquitos, following the declaration of the former as a nature park. He dealt particularly with Great White Pelicans *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, Greater Flamingos *Phoenicopterus ruber* and Lesser Flamingos *Phoenicoparrus minor* and illustrated his address with fine colour slides.

Reflections of an ex-editor

by Earl of Cranbrook
(retiring Editor of the *Ibis*).

Adapted from a speech in reply to the toast of 'The Guests' at the meeting held to commemorate the 100th volume of the *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*.

In the 121 years of its existence, there have been only 15 Editors of the *Ibis*. Some incumbents have shown great endurance. Besides the 40 years (alone or jointly) of P. L. Sclater, the 28 of W. L. Sclater or 14 of R. E. Moreau, my 7 years in office rank as a trivial contribution. Modesty should inhibit me from public utterance of opinions formed during so comparatively brief a term. Yet the invitation to respond to your Chairman's toast on this historic occasion, coupled with the urging of your Editor (who is also among my predecessors) to drag out my reply 'for quite 15 minutes or more', prompt me to discuss views on matters relating to the publication, funding, preparation and editing of ornithological research papers.

Publication

The promulgation of results or conclusions is an integral step in the scientific process. Although the spoken word is useful for an initial presentation, this medium is too transitory and too limited in its audience to suffice as a sole record. Publication in a book or journal is the accepted proper culmination of an episode of scientific research. Modern electronic devices may change the means of storage, transmission or retrieval, but print on paper is likely to remain the most convenient and durable form of record for ordinary purposes.

It follows that every research project—even if comparatively trivial—should be designed to end with the preparation of a written report. In ornithology (especially field ornithology, in which the doing is the fun) this goal can recede once the active phase of accumulation of data is over. It is common experience that adherence to deadlines is very difficult under the most favourable circumstances. All too often the demands of a developing career involve new, unrelated research objectives. More mundane but no less pressing social or professional obligations can intrude. Nonetheless, any ornithologist who, for instance, accepts a grant or participates in an expedition thereby incurs an obligation to prepare and submit a report in a form fit for publication. Conversely, those who administer grants or plan expeditions

must make adequate provision, in time and in funds, to allow participants to fulfil this obligation. Although these two complementary aspects may seem self-evident, both are not always given sufficient consideration.

Funding

In ornithology, as generally in the biological sciences in U.K., there exists a wide option of specialist outlets for research papers. The periodicals have remarkably diverse administrative and financial backgrounds. Some are wholly commercial ventures, some the productions of research institutes operating under forms of charitable trust, others the journals of societies or associations that may be national, regional or local, or devoted to restricted taxonomic groups of birds. In the publication of *Ibis*, the B.O.U. has entered into an agreement with Academic Press. This arrangement is similar to those made by other biological journals. I suspect that the widespread formation of associations of this nature between publishing firms and learned societies has been a vitalising factor in post-war scientific publication.

There is of course no British national ornithological institute to match the ornithological sections of the national academies of science that exist in many other countries, nor is there a state-supported national ornithological journal. Yet in ornithology, as in other branches of biology, much (if not most) research nowadays is funded by government, either directly at research institutes (I.T.E., B.A.S., etc.) or the British Museum (Natural History), or indirectly by grant (through N.E.R.C., etc.). Government research institutes do produce publications, but these are devoted chiefly or exclusively to 'house' research. For their papers the staff of these institutes also seek other outlets, including the *Ibis*.

When the costs of the national research effort are largely supported by government, I find it anomalous that the expenses of the publication of results in the leading British ornithological journal should be borne by the 1800 or so subscribing members of B.O.U. in their joint venture with Academic Press. In order to test the opportunities to vary this feature of accepted practice, a little more than 3 years ago (following a B.O.U. Council decision) a couple of sentences were added at the foot of the 'Notice to contributors'. These words were printed in italics to give prominence to their message:

> *Authors whose grant-support includes provision for the costs of publication are requested to notify the Editor of this fact. Any such funds offered will be used to increase the numbers of pages in the* Ibis, *and for no other purpose.* (1977, *Ibis* 119, no. 1).

To date no author, as far as I recollect, has spontaneously informed the Editor that such funds are available. After prompting, several authors have provided all or part of the actual costs of printing their papers. Only one such contributor was based in the U.K. As he knows, it is not from disrespect for his gesture that I mention that he could only pay for one-third of a page. The *Ibis* will not falter and certainly will never fail for lack of these funds. Yet it seems a ripe moment to ask when grant-seekers and grant-givers in our own country will turn their attention to this subject.

Preparation

The obligation of the ornithologist, as a scientist, to publish the results of his research ought not be translated into precipitance. In the popular

image, influenced by literature such as *The Double Helix* (Watson 1968), the scientist is driven by the urge to be first in an intense, even bitter, professional race. In interpretative ornithology, ideas may (and perhaps do) arise at the same time in different minds with genuine intellectual independence. Field or experimental ornithology, on the other hand, contains a sufficiently strong descriptive component to prevent complete overlap between genuinely independent projects. No doubt it is wise to ensure, as far as possible, that a prospective study is not already engaging another ornithologist. Yet even when the reports of two separate investigations of the same topic were submitted to me nearly simultaneously, it was still possible to recognise differences in content and to publish both on adjacent pages (Burtt 1975, Hodges 1975). Undue haste to obtain pre-emptive publication is probably often not in the best interests of science and certainly very rarely propitious in human relations.

Very early in my editorial term, a referee advised me that a certain submission had already been published in almost identical form in a local natural history bulletin. In accordance with the clear statement on this matter in the 'Notice to contributors', I refused the paper. For this I was chided by a senior supporter of the author, who claimed that by withholding the opportunity to publish (re-publish in this case) in the *Ibis* I was damaging a young man's professional prospects. On similar grounds, on other occasions, other correspondents have asked for concessionary treatment for themselves or their protegés. It is worrying to be told (sometimes at length, on the telephone, once from as far as Texas) that a career is in jeopardy, but this cannot be a factor to influence editorial decisions.

It is also rather widely believed that a professional biologist is esteemed and his promotion facilitated more by the number of his published papers than by their content. If proof is needed, this contention is supported (a little unfairly) by the evident tendency for the output of older, established ornithologists to become increasingly repetitive. Again, I was once rebuked by my most constant self-appointed critic for including a paper, by one such figure, that contained only a small nugget of originality couched in a voluminous recapitulation of earlier published work. In this case, the original submission had in fact suffered massive editorial excisions and, in consideration of all circumstances, I felt that my decision was right. I am sure that the ornithologist should plan to publish his work in an organised fashion, through a carefully selected variety of outlets. But the author who aims for quantity through replication will certainly provoke irritation among editors and, in the end, forfeit the respect of his colleagues.

Sir Peter Medawar (1979, p. 63) felt 'disloyal but dauntingly truthful in saying that most scientists do *not* know how to write'. This opinion has been held for many years, both by literary men and by scientists of eminence (Galton 1908). With the great proliferation of scientific output in recent decades, the activity of advising writers has itself shown reflected growth. A selection of publications concerned only with the English language includes those of the Royal Society (1950), Conference of Biological Editors (1960), Hawkins (1967), Sanford (1967, 1968), Council of Biology Editors (1972), O'Connor & Woodford (1975) and the International Steering Committee of Medical Editors (1979).

The *Ibis* seeks to report new ornithology from all parts of the globe and

to attract readers and contributors from the international field. Authors whose mother-tongue is not English should not be deterred and, in practice, are not. All past Editors have presumably been as willing as myself to undertake wholesale revision and rewriting in such cases. Between American and British usage of our common language there are small divergencies in spelling of which we, as the minority, cannot expect our Transatlantic homoglots to be aware. There tend also to be less acceptable differences in style and convention, particularly in the use of jargon, which again require sympathetic but sometimes wholesale revision. My chief animadversion is towards authors from universities or research institutes who fail to take advantage of the comparative wealth of constructive, practical advice on the procedures of scientific writing and publication now available through the services of any library. The amateur can be excused many solecisms, but the student or qualified professional should approach the composition of his written work with as much care and rigour as he does the preceding stages of his research programme.

At first experience, the formal structure of a scientific paper may strike the tyro as unduly restrictive. The traditional literary qualities—variety, vividness of expression, lightness of touch, deft verbal devices, etc.—are rarely compatible with the standardised progression of topics and the unremitting requirements of precision and conciseness in a scientific paper. The beginner needs instruction and practise in the writing of reports. I urge lecturers, supervisors or heads of research departments to ensure that those for whom they have responsibility are given the opportunity to learn before they make their first submission to an editor. There may even be some among the instructors, too, who could profitably consult the references listed above. In more than one British institution, in my opinion, the introduction of a short course on scientific writing would be of equal benefit to staff and students.

Editing

Although I have complained (above) that in this country the national funding of research does not extend to the support of specialist periodicals such as the *Ibis*, this situation may not be without benefit. Editorial policy is beholden only to the Council and membership of B.O.U., and is independent of external pressure. To this extent, British ornithologists are in control of their own publication medium.

At present, any supplementary funds received from authors are used to meet the costs of extra pages, in excess of the annual total stipulated in the agreement with Academic Press. A more significant income from this source might permit, among other things, the recruitment of a full-time salaried editor. Yet, again, at present the Editor, receiving merely a small honorarium that for years has been wholly incommensurate with the work involved, is the servant only of his conscience (subject to election or re-election for a 4-year term). This freedom is a welcome element in the present system.

The editor draws upon the specialist assistance of referees in assessing the technical competence of a submission. There is no fixed panel of referees and, given the very wide scope of material acceptable for publication ('the entire field of ornithology', interpreted in practice as anything involving birds), it would probably be difficult to select a small group of persons with sufficiently wide expertise. Choice of referees has been a matter of judgement, taking into account factors including availability (many ornithologists manage to

spend a lot of time abroad and incommunicado), research interests, willingness, astuteness and thoroughness.

In many instances, even the most percipient and assiduous referee can only give a qualified recommendation. Excepting papers that are so brilliant or so abysmal that the process of referal is largely redundant, the final judgement must still lie with the editor. Only he can assess a submission in the context of others already received, accepted or awaiting publication. It is his responsibility to impose an acceptable degree of uniformity in style and presentation that contributes to the recognised qualities of his journal. It is his function to encourage an interchange, involving the author(s), himself and the referee, if necessary, that will achieve a compromise acceptable to all interests. It is not always easy, but if successful the editor plays a useful part in this, the final stage of the research project. I am happy to say that I have received many more thanks than curses in the process, and these have contributed towards the satisfaction of editing *Ibis*.

I thank the librarians of the Linnean Society and Zoological Society of London for the selection and loan of certain literature cited in this paper.

References:

Burtt, E. H., Jr. 1975. Cliff-facing interaction between parent and chick Kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla* in Newfoundland. *Ibis* 117: 241–242.

Conference of Biological Editors. 1960. *Style Manual for Biological Journals*. Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Biological Sciences.

Council of Biology Editors. 1972. *CBE Style Manual* (3rd edn.). Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Biological Sciences.

Galton, F. 1908. Suggestions for improving the literary style of scientific memoirs. *Trans. R. Soc. Lit.* 28(2), 17 pp.

Hawkins, C. H. 1967. *Speaking and Writing in Medicine*. Springfield, Illinois: Thomas.

Hodges, A. F. 1975. The orientation of adult Kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla* at the nest site in Northumberland. *Ibis* 117: 235–240.

International Steering Committee of Medical Editors. 1979. Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals. *Med. Lab. Sci.* 36: 319–328.

Medawar, P. B. 1979. *Advice to a Young Scientist*. New York: Harper & Row.

O'Connor, M. & Woodford, F. P. 1975. *Writing Scientific Papers in English*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Royal Society. 1950 (2nd revised edition, 1965). *General Notes on the Preparation of Scientific Papers*. London: Royal Society.

Sanford, F. B. 1967. *Organizing the Research Report to Reveal the Units of Research*. U.S. Dept. Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service, circ. 272.

Sanford, F. B. 1968. *Organizing the Technical Article*. U.S Dept. Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service, circ. 269.

Watson, J. D. 1968. *The Double Helix*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Address: The Earl of Cranbrook, Ph.D., Great Glemham House, Great Glemham, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 1LP.

The type locality of *Rheinartia ocellata nigrescens* Rothschild

by G. W. H. Davison

Received 8 September 1979

The Peninsular Malaysian subspecies of the Crested Argus *Rheinartia ocellata nigrescens* was described by Rothschild (1902) from 2 male and 1 female specimens taken by J. Waterstradt's Dayak collectors. In the original description the type locality was given as "the eastern Malay Peninsula, at Ulu Pahang", that is, an imprecisely defined region around the headwaters of the Pahang river.